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Geoff Eley, ed. *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996. viii + 512 pp. $59.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-472-10627-1.

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Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930 is intended, according to its editor, to suggest new ways of doing German history. Having already played an integral role in revising the earlier paradigm of German exceptionalism, Geoff Eley (along with his fellow contributors to this volume) provides an array of investigative possibilities for interpreting German history. The continuity of elites from Bismarck to Hitler, the alliance of iron and rye, the manipulative techniques of social imperialism, the weakness of liberalism, and the primacy of pre-industrial traditions have all "outrun their course" (p. 41).

In addition to the new ways of looking at German history proposed by the other contributors, Eley outlines what he considers promising avenues of research in his introductory essay, all coming from outside the established framework of debate. Relatively new fields of inquiry such as gender studies, post-Foucault analysis, and cultural studies all promise to "break the frame" of traditional historiography of modern Germany.

There are four chapters in the volume dealing with what might loosely be called gender studies. Jean Quataert, in a second introductory chapter, after looking at the roadblocks gender studies have faced within a conservative German history profession, surveys the various ways that feminist historiography and gender studies have changed and are changing views of German history. Kathleen Canning's chapter looks at the ways gender has complicated and enriched traditional categories of class formation. Rather than strict dichotomies of class and gender, Canning advocates seeing class formation "as a series of short-lived resolutions, new destabilizations, and redefinitions in which gender both shapes and contests class" (p. 141). How bourgeois women hoped to use Germany's colony in Southwest Africa to improve their career opportunities is the subject of Lora Wildenthal's chapter. Although German women colonialists hoped to achieve in Southwest Africa that which seemed unattainable (or at least slow in coming) in Germany–enhanced public and personal fulfillment for educated German women–they ultimately discovered that "German women were officially desirable in Southwest Africa not for their talents or their intellect but for their ability to supply the German settlers with white German babies" (p. 386). Elisabeth Domansky charts the end of the "family romance" in Germany via the fundamental reordering of the patriarchial German family during World War I. She argues that World War I "constitutes not a 'link' between the Second and the Third Reich but a radical rupture in German history. It is this rupture more than any kind of perceived continuity between pre- and postwar German society that produced National Socialism in Germany–and fascism in other countries" (433-34).

The development and evolution of the state provide the topical link among six chapters, though the entire volume serves to raise questions regarding the distinction between the state and the rest of society. In "German History and the Contradictions of Modernity: The Bourgeoisie, the State, and the Mastery of Reform" Eley argues that it was not Germany's failure to modernize (as claimed by Dahrendorf and Wehler) that inexorably led to genocide. Indeed, it was Germans' embrace of Enlightenment science that was the problem. "Rather than politicizing science in some illegitimate sense, Nazism worked upon traditions of discourse that had connected science to politics since the *Kaiserreich*.... The Nazis' racialized politics were continuous with what passed as the ruling knowledge of the time and were less an eruption of the irrational than an extreme form of technocratic reason" (pp. 102-3). Along similar lines, Frank Trommler builds a case for the relative modernity of official imperial culture. Rather than Weimar *Sachlichkeit* being a reaction against expressionism, it was the other way around; the anti-realistic and anti-materialistic expressionist movement was attempting to counter capitalist materialism and the destructive power of technology. Seen this way, "... *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the twenties has to be seen not only as a continuation of the prewar culture of *Sachlichkeit* but also as an attempt to regain this

concept from its usage by those, especially on the Right, whose agenda is to constitute a permanent state of war. To link "*Sachlichkeit* with the democratic message from America is part of the aesthetic politics of the Weimar Republic. Under these auspices, *Neue Sachlichkeit* appears as artistically less, and politically more, propitious than usually assumed" (p. 484).

James Retallack, in "Liberals, Conservatives and the Modernizing State: The *Kaiserreich* in Regional Perspective," provides an example of how a regional examination of electoral politics can "supplement and perhaps recast" the "dissatisfyingly Prussocentric and statist perspectives on political modernization in Germany" (p. 223). By examining the *buergerlich* response to the challenge of socialism in Saxony, Retallack shows that antisocialism was considerably more complex both among and within the regions. George Steinmetz takes issue with "The Myth of an Autonomous State." Rather than viewing a progressive commercial class and a reactionary imperial government, he states that "public policy was aligned with industrial capitalism due to the ongoing socialization of many of the state's civil servants into modernizing an ethos supportive of industrial capitalism, and due to the state's increasing dependence on resources generated by 'private' actors in civil society" (p. 260). He concludes that "In order to pursue its specific goals, the state had no choice but to ally with modern business." While Steinmetz argues that the state was more modern than commonly assumed, Belinda Davis contends that the state was more extensive than traditionally believed. In "Reconsidering Habermas, Gender, and the Public Sphere," Davis uses Habermas's concept of the public sphere while utilizing the example of "women of less means" to show that Habermas's liberal bourgeois public sphere is too narrowly construed. By showing that the Berlin police accepted poor women protesting food shortages as a legitimate power capable of influencing public sentiment and opinion–despite their lack of franchise–the author seeks to "lead us to a somewhat revised view of the political culture of the *Kaiserreich*" (406).

Of the six chapters devoted to the state, two deal with the welfare state. Young-Sun Hong, in "World War I and the German Welfare State: Gender, Religion, and the Paradoxes of Modernity," points out the irony of the role played by the war in undermining "those traditional patterns of social deference and political authority that the war was presumably being fought to protect" (p. 345). The Weimar Republic would inherit the at times bitter contest between secular state authority and confessional charitable organizations, a contest ultimately "resolved" by Nazism. David Crew's contribution, "The Ambiguities of Modernity: Welfare and the German State from Wilhelm to Hitler," critiques Peukert's "crisis of classical modernity" thesis, arguing instead that the "Weimar welfare state was seen by contemporaries more as a form of 'damage control' than as the culmination of a utopian project initiated in the 1890s" (p. 326). Crew faults Peukert for paying insufficient attention to the role of the World War and the backlash against the invasion of the "public sphere" by groups and interests previously excluded (workers, women, even welfare recipients).

David Blackbourn uses the case of religious apparitions in Marpingen in 1876 to explore the implementation of the *Kulturkampf*, the relationship between Prussian imperial authority and local control, and the dilemma faced by progressive liberals forced to choose between their commitment to anti-clericalism and Bismarckian repression. His chapter suggests the importance linking "the history of mentalities and organizations, everyday life, and politics" (p. 219). Similar to Blackbourn, Rudy Koshar blurs the increasingly outmoded division between political history and cultural history by using national monuments and conserved ruins (which often served as national monuments) to examine the "self-historization of the historian that has come with continuing debates over epistemology in the human sciences" (pp. 487-88). Inspired by the concepts of archaeology, fossils, and ruins, Koshar utilizes his research into national memory and the preservation of national historical landmarks to posit a "collective denial," a "political-cultural inability to walk away from the broken promise of a clearly resolved past and future, that constitutes" a narrative of continuity (p. 512).

In summary, this volume provides a selection of tentative but complementary models for modifying the historiography of modern German history. Its authors call into question traditional distinctions between public and private spheres, the presumed continuity between imperial and Nazi Germany, and the alleged social and cultural backwardness of the *Kaiserreich*. The contributions provide what the 1990 conference, from the which this volume developed, promised: new research, new directions, new agendas.

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